

REMARKS

Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly define the features of the present invention. Claims 3 and 13 have been amended to correct a typographical error. Claims 2, 4-9, 11, 12, 14 and 16-19 have been resubmitted as originally filed. Claims 10 and 15 have been amended to more clearly define the features of the present invention. Claim 20 has been withdrawn without prejudice or disclaimer. A clean copy of the pending claims is attached herewith. No new matter has been added. Claims 1-19 are respectfully submitted for reconsideration.

The Official Action included an election/restriction requirement under 35 U.S.C. § 121. In the Official Action, the Examiner identified two distinct inventions. The Examiner required the Applicant, under 35 U.S.C. § 121, to elect a single invention for prosecution. The two inventions identified by the Examiner are: Group I, claims 1-19 and Group II, claim 20. Pursuant to the Examiner's requirement, the Applicant elects Group I with traverse.

Applicant believes that the subject matter of the non-elected group is close enough in nature that a prior art search of the subject matter of Group I would necessarily encompass the subject matter of the non-elected Group II. Applicant reserves the right to file a divisional application on the non-elected subject matter.

Claims 3 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 due to a typographical error. By changing the dependency of the claim 3 to claim 2, this

rejection has been overcome. Applicant respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Claims 1, 4-8, 10, 11, 13-15, 18 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Price U.S. Patent No. 2002/0158098.

Claims 1, 4, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 18 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Groover, U.S. Patent No. 6,257,942.

Claims 2, 3, 9 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Groover.

Claim 16 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Price in view of Green et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,934,484.

Claim 17 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Price in view of Dowe, Sr., U.S. Patent No. 6,382,352.

Independent claim 1, upon which claims 2-9 depend, recites a device for conducting reconnoiter and rescue operations in a darkened or burning structure. The device comprises a rope for coupling a firefighter with a hose line or main line search rope. A bag stores the rope that couples the firefighter with the hose line. An attachment means is included for attaching the bag onto the firefighter's equipment. This attachment means comprises a retaining strap and a belt strap.

Independent claim 10, upon which claims 11-19 depend, recites a device for assisting firemen in fighting fires. The device comprises a means for coupling a firefighter with a hose line or main line search rope. A means is provided for storing the means for coupling the firefighter with the hose line or main line search rope. A means is also provided for attaching the means for storing the

means for coupling the firefighter with the hose line or main line search rope onto a firefighter's equipment. The means for attaching the means for storing the means that couples the firefighter with the hose line or main line search rope onto a firefighter's equipment comprises a retaining strap.

Applicant respectfully submits that each of the pending claims as submitted herein recites subject matter that is neither disclosed nor suggested in the cited prior art. Namely, none of the cited prior art discloses or suggests a device for conducting reconnoiter and rescue operations in a darkened or burning structure that includes an attachment means for attaching a bag onto firefighter's equipment where the attachment means comprises a retaining strap and a belt strap, as recited in claim 1. Regarding claim 10, Applicant respectfully submits that none of the cited prior art discloses or suggests a means for attaching the means for storing the means that couples a firefighter with a hose line or a main line search rope onto a firefighter's equipment includes a retaining strap. Moreover, Applicant respectfully submits that none of the cited prior art either singly or in combination teaches or suggests the claimed elements of the present invention for the following reasons.

Price discloses a safety kit including a bag with a rope for assisting a firefighter during a descent. The kit is secured to a firefighter's belt by loop 16 that is formed from a strip of material having opposite ends 18 and 20 permanently affixed to bag 22, as disclosed in paragraph 13 and shown in the figures. In Figure 2a, the bag is shown being secured to the firefighter by a carbineer. It is clear that Price neither teaches nor suggests securing the kit to

the firefighter with a belt strap and/or a restraining strap as claimed in the independent claims of the present invention.

Groover discloses a phosphorescent rescue line throw-bag with a transparent sidewall for aiding a rescuer in sighting the throw-bag. Groover neither teaches nor suggests the claimed belt strap and/or restraining strap of the present invention. Moreover, it is respectfully submitted that a throw-bag should not be affixed to a rescuer or a rescuer as such could result in the drowning of either or both should the line from the throw-bag become entangled with an obstacle during a rescue operation. Thus, no motivation exists for modifying the Groover invention to include the claimed belt strap and/or restraining strap of the present invention.

Green et al. discloses a descending life saving device that comprises a nylon support rope. Green neither teaches nor suggests a belt strap and/or a restraining strap as claimed in the present invention. Thus, Green is deficient in its teaching at least for the same reasons as Price and Groover and cannot therefore be relied upon to overcome the deficiencies of these references.

Dowe, Sr. discloses a deployable emergency escape ladder that permits rapid egress from the upper floors of a building in the event of fire. Dowe neither teaches nor suggests a belt strap and/or a restraining strap as claimed in the present invention. Thus, Dowe is deficient in his teaching at least for the same reasons as Price, Groover and Green. It cannot therefore be relied upon to overcome the deficiencies of these references.

The applicant respectfully traverses rejections of the pending claims as being unpatentable and submits that none of the references either singly or in combination teaches or suggests all of the claimed features of the present invention. Further, applicant strongly submits that the subject matter which distinguishes the present invention from the cited prior art is more than sufficient to render the claimed invention unobvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that claims all of the pending claims be found allowable, and this application be passed to issue.

If for any reason the Examiner determines that the application is not currently in condition for allowance, that the Examiner contact by telephone, the applicant's undersigned attorney at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this application.

Respectfully submitted,



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